7 – 3 – 2022 - If God….

 Tomorrow we will celebrate the 246th Birthday of our country. Independence Day from the tyranny and oppression of the British Empire. Our founding Fathers

had a dream and their action made it happen.

 **If believers would live out God’s word, we would see God do some amazing things.**

 Look at Psalm 118: 6 *The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?*

 This morning, imagine with me what your life would be like **if**…

 **If**, Money was not an issue

 **If**, Your dreams would become reality. Would you be able to identify what you want from life?

 **If**, You could start over, have a do-over, a mulligan in golf.

 Would you do anything different? We hope most of us would say yes. Why?

 Because **if** you were smart, you would have learned from your mistakes.

 You would make smarter decisions concerning your life and not live for the moment.

 You would look long range and not be short sighted.

 Why do we think short term when it concerns the things of God? Thinking like, I have plenty of time to do these things. I will deal with that when the time comes.

 According to Google search there are 1,784 **if’s** in the Bible. I will take their word for it.

 Any one **if**, could change your life.

 Any one **if**, could change anything and everything.

Think about it, a lot of stuff starts with **if**

**If** I go to college

**If** I go talk to him/her

**If** I apply for this job

**If** I get out of my own comfort zone

**If** I would save money

**If** I take the time

**If** I have the courage

 **Until if, becomes a determined action, it is a dream that has no legs!**

Thank God the founding fathers of our great nation gave their dream of freedom legs.

 I remember when God called me to ministry. I remember where I was and what I knew God was telling me.

 There were hundreds of **if’s** in my mind. Some negative and some positive.

 Some drawing me toward God’s call and many excuses that took me away from God’s call.

I mean negative obstacles that pulled me away.

What are, your **if’s**?

Let’s look at two **ifs**-

What if… and If only…

 One is present and forward looking and one is past and looking back. Which one will define your life when life on this earth is over?

 Like I said there are over 1700 **if** passages in the Bible and we certainly are not going to look at each one. But there are a few I do want to look at and they will literally change your life if you will let them.

 As we get older, we use less of the left side of the brain which is the imagination side and more of the right side which is supposed to be the more logical side. Sometimes people don’t use their brain when it comes to the eternal spiritual things in their life.

(1) Let’s start with what **if**…

 We have all said that to ourselves. What if and named numerous things that could happen **if** I would choose to take positive action toward it.

College

Relationships

Career/Job

Courage for change.

 **We all have had some regrets later that our “what if” turned into “I should have”.**

 Why? Because we did not respond positively when the opportunity came up.

 In 2 Chronicles 7: 14 God spoke to Solomon,*“14 Then* ***if*** *my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.”*

 Would you agree that this world is in trouble?

 Are God’s people seeking His face, and on their knees praying that God would intervene in this troubling time.

Disunity

Family breakdowns

Racial divide

Conflict / Terrorism

Political unrest

 These are only a few problems that face us as a nation.

 There are certain things we have to do **if**… we want to see God’s hand in our lives. Then, when we take action, we can see God intervene.

 God said, **If** my people will pray, seek my face, and repent, then I will restore their land.

 Our awesome, amazing God calls His people to pray, seek His face, repent, and He out of His graciousness promises to restore, to heal our land and be our God.

 An awesome promise from God **if** we take a hard look and respond, take action on His word **if**.

 From Evangelist Tony Evans on prayer;

“Prayer is an earthly request for heavenly intervention. It is the tool and strategy we have been given in order to pull something down out of the invisible and into the visible. Prayer enacts God’s hand in history like nothing else because prayer is relational communication with God.”

 **If**…we are going to turn our communities and nation around, God’s people are going to have to repent and humble themselves before the face of Almighty God.

 **We could save a lot of time and worry if we communicated with God and did things His way. Amen?**

 Another what **if** passage is found in Romans 8: 31 *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these?* ***If*** *God is for us, who can ever be against us?*

 Let’s take a moment to look closer at that passage!

 The God of the universe, the creator of all things, the God that saves your soul and promises you eternal life, **if** He is for you… who could possibly be against you that you have to worry about?

 We have to take this verse in context and be reminded that this world is not our final resting spot.

 We are more than conquerors in Christ. IN CHRIST.

 We know that all things work together for Good. TO THOSE THAT LOVE HIM.

 Those who may have present suffering but will one day receive FUTURE GLORY.

Romans 8: 24 - 25

*“24 We were given this hope when we were saved. (****If*** *we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. 25 But* ***if*** *we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)*

 Some people seem to have the idea that God is like a wicked father who can't wait for His children to misbehave so that He can punish them. But that description in no way fits our loving father.

 Although our heavenly Father is a just God and will punish those who **do not** know Him or obey the His gospel, it says in 2 Thessalonians 1: 7 – 9

*7 He will come with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who* ***don’t*** *know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from His glorious power.*

 The Scriptures plainly reveal that God is also a loving Father, who does not want to see any perish as in 2 Peter 3: 9*"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"*.

If God is for us, who can come against us?

 Paul continues in Romans 8 with proof of God’s power in our lives **If** we trust and obey

Romans 8: 32 God will graciously give us all things

Romans 8: 33 No one will bring a charge against us

Romans 8: 34 In Christ there is no condemnation

Romans 8: 35 – 39 Nothing will separate us from the love of Christ

 Remember that God is outside of time.

 We calculate time by the rotations of the Earth around the sun and the passing of seasons, but God holds the sun and the Earth in His hands! Therefore, what we perceive as past, present, and future, God sees as one constant present."

Here is a third one, Romans 10: 9 *“****If*** *you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord; and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved,”*

 Our mouths can say anything, in fact God’s word tells us that our hearts are deceitful, and our tongue is wicked.

 But when God gets a hold of our heart and out of our Christ centered heart comes belief in God and our mouth confesses that truth, then we can be assured of salvation on the promises of God.

 I want you to see Paul’s heart as he wrote these words and see God’s mercy and Grace as He gave it to him.

Paul is dealing with mistaken zeal

The Jews were zealous for God

 Paul acknowledged that but they were more zealous for religion and Paul was putting it in perspective.

 They based their religion on obedience to the law. The 10 commandments which none of us have been able to keep. If you broke one you were forever lost in your sin.

 Paul was saying that Christianity is based upon a relationship with Christ Jesus and what **He** has done for us.

 Because you have a relationship with the Lord, you strive to keep His teachings and be obedient to His word.

 The Law told you how far you could walk on the Sabbath.

 **If** any burden weighed more than two dried figs, you could not lift it.

 You could keep a sick person from getting worse, but you could not make them better on the Sabbath.

The Jews struggled with the **if**

 The Jews wanted it by their works, Paul is telling them to put their faith in the finished work of Christ **if** they want to be saved.

 The Jews struggled with the fact that the good news was open to all / everyone. Paul tells them that *“Everyone that calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

 The Jews struggled with the fact that they compared themselves to others, that they were better than instead of seeing each one as sinners compared to a holy and perfect savior in Jesus Christ.

The one little word **if** makes the difference in what **if**

 What **if** you truly believed that if God’s people would humble themselves and pray, seek His face, God would restore/heal their land.

 What **if** you truly believed that **if** God was for you, who could possibly be against you that could eternally harm you?

 What **if** you truly believed that Christ Jesus is Lord.

 What **if**, You, down deep in your heart believe that He died for your sins, was raised by our Heavenly Father from the grave and because of that fact, that belief of His resurrection power, you had eternal life.

 HOW WOULD THAT CHANGE HOW YOU LIVE EACH DAY?

 **If** these things became beliefs you lived, your life would be changed forever.

 The final **if** for this morning is **if** only.

 Every one of us has **if** only regrets!

 Back to the very first things I said to you this morning we all have maybe career things we’d do different, maybe relationships we missed, maybe **if** we got out of our comfort zone our life would be different.

 **If believers would live out God’s word, we would see God do some amazing things.**

 The **if** only can destroy you **if** you let them. We cannot go back and change those things in our past.

 We can in fact from this day move forward.

 The only “**if only**” that would have eternal consequences is “**if only** I had put my faith in Jesus”, surrendered to His will and His way, that is one that cannot be changed or done over once your life on this earth in over.

 I only see people sitting here this morning who are very much alive, we all at this moment have a chance to have God speak to us.

 I have been praying for God to speak in a special way to each of us.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 *“Therefore,* ***if*** *anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old is gone, the new has come.”*

 A new creation in the fact that you would now look at what Christ has done for you and not at all your short comings.

 A new creation that your past does not define who you are, Christ defines who you are in Him.

 A new creation in the fact that what is ahead of you is fresh and new and not a carrying of the past that weighs you down but a freedom that is in Christ.

 In Christ, means that you **do not** do things only in your strength but now are able to call upon the Lord to help you.

 **If** is a very big word when we look at it through the eyes of God’s Word! Amen.

 **If** you look at redemption, you will not live in condemnation.

 **If** you look at reconciliation, you will not live in alienation of a God who completely adores you.

 Would you bow your head this morning and pray with me **if** you want that loving God to speak to you this morning. To show you His love and mercy and grace!

 Father God, in the Name of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus we pray our worship be acceptable before you. Let the peace that surpasses all understanding be with us as we leave this place. Help us to make a difference in our world this new week. Let our words and actions align with your word. Help us to practice what we have learned here today. Bless us as we leave this place and help us to be a blessing to everyone that we meet and interact with. Help us never to forget that you’re with us always. In Jesus’ name, we believe and pray, Amen.